

Message Text

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S E C R E T BEIRUT 3010

EXDIS

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, PINT, LE, SY
SUBJ: TALK WITH SAEB SALAM ON SYRIAN POLICY

SUMMARY: ACCORDING TO SALAM, ASAD HAS NOT CHANGED HIS
POLICY OF POOPOSITION TO EDDE PRESIDENCY AND CONTINUES HIS EFFORT
TO SUBVERT AND CRUSH JUMBLATT. THIS IS BOUND TO LEAD TO CON-
TINUED SPOILING ACTION BY JUMBLATT, WHOM PALESTINIANS CANNOT AFFORD
TO DISASSOCIATE THEMSELVES FROM PERMANENTLY. END SUMMARY.

1. I SENT LAMBRAKIS TO TALK TO SAEB SALAM TODAY, IN VIEW OF
SALAM'S TRIP TO DAMASCUS A COUPLE OF DAYS AGO WHERE HE SAW ASAD.
SALAM MADE NO BONES OF FACT HE HAD PRESSED ASAD TO DROP HIS VETO ON
EDDE AS PRESIDENT. HE HAD EXPLAINED EDDE IS WIDELY CONSIDERED
INDEPENDENT, HONEST, AND BY FAR STRONGEST AND BEST OF THE MARONITE
CANDIDATES. EDDE WAS PREPARED TO COOPERATE WITH SYRIANS, BUT HE
WOULD NOT ACT AS A LACKEY AND WOULD MAINTAIN HIS DIGNITY. ASAD
RAISED OLD OBJECTION THAT EDDE HAD ATTACKED HIM IN PARIS PRESS
CONFERENCE FEW MONTHS AGO. SALAM ARGUED THAT STORY WAS HEAD-
LINED AS AN ACCUSATION OF SYRIAN COMPLICITY WITH ISRAEL, BUT TEXT OF
EDDE'S REMARKS DID NOT CONTAIN ISRAELI REFERENCE. ASAD ALSO RAISED
EDDE'S REFUSAL TO COOPERATE WITH ZOUHAIR MOHSEN OF SAIQA. SALAM
REPLIED THIS WAS TO EDDE'S CREDIT. MOHSEN WAS A VERY POOR REPRESENTATIVE OF SYRIAN INTERESTS IN LEBANON AND ASAD SHOULD KNOW IT.
IF PRIMIN KARAME DOES NOT TELL ASAD THIS TRUTH HE, SALAM, WILL.
MOHSEN AND HIS SAIQA ARE KNOWN IN MOSLEM COMMUNITY AS
"ALI BABA AND THE FORTY THIEVES". HIS ACTIVITIES HAVE ALIENATED

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MOSLEM COMMUNITY FROM SYRIA. SALAM SUMMED UP THAT ASAD

HAD NOT CHANGED HIS OPINION ON EDDE, BUT SEEMED AT LEAST TO HAVE WAVERED SOME.

2. SALAM TOLD ASAD THAT SYRIANS ARE VERY BADLY INFORMED ON REALITIES OF LEBANON. (THERE ARE AT LEAST SIX POINTS IN SYRIAN ESTABLISHMENT OF WHICH INFORMATION ON LEBANON FILTERS IN AND WHICH ARE INVOLVED IN LEBANESE AFFAIRS, SUCH AS ARMY INTELLIGENCE, BAATH PARTY, ETC.) SYRIANS HAVE HANDLED THEIR INTERVENTION VERY CLUMSILY.

3. A LEADING EXAMPLE OF THIS CLUMSINESS IS WAY SYRIANS ARE DEALING WITH JUMBLATT. ASAD INSISTED THAT HE COULD CRUSH JUMBLATT AND SALAM INSISTED BACK THAT HE COULD NOT. HE MUST TAME HIM SINCE HE CANNOT DESTROY HIM. INSTEAD, ASAD REVEALED VARIOUS SYRIAN MANEUVERS WITH OTHER MEMBERS OF DRUZE COMMUNITY WHOM HE NAMED TO SALAM. (SALAM HERE DROPPED A COUPLE OF FAIRLY UNKNOWN NAMES.) ASAD WAS UNDER THE IMPRESSION THAT HE COULD THROUGH THESE PEOPLE SUBVERT JUMBLATT'S HOLD ON THE DRUZE. ASAD THOUGHT HITTING THE DRUZE HARD WOULD MAKE THEM DROP THEIR ALLEGIANCE TO JUMBLATT BUT SALAM IS SURE THAT WILL ONLY INTENSIFY THEIR ALLEGIANCE TO HIM. MEANWHILE, JUMBLATT CONTINUES TO PLAY WITH LEBANESE LEFT WING AND PALESTINIANS IN ORDER TO PROTECT HIMSELF FROM THE SYRIANS.

4. JUMBLATT REALIZES, ACCORDING TO SALAM, THAT COMMUNISTS HAVE MADE GREAT GAINS IN THIS COUNTRY. THEY HAVE ATTAINED CHAOS WHICH THEY ALONE WANT, USING OTHERS. SALAM ATTACKED ASAD WITH THIS. HE ACCUSED ASAD OF UNWITTINGLY BUILDING UP THE IMPORTANCE OF THESE COMMUNISTS WHEN HE SENT SYRIAN PLANES TO LEBANON AND SHUTTLED SO-CALLED "PROGRESSIVE PARTY LEADERS" BACK AND FORTH TO DAMASCUS. THESE "PROGRESSIVE PARTIES" BREAK DOWN BASICALLY TO JUST TWO: HAWI, LEADER OF THE COMMUNISTS, AND MOHSEN BRAHIM OF THE COMMUNIST ACTION GROUP. THEY HANG AROUND JUMBLATT AND KEEP HIM SAYING AND DOING THINGS THAT THEY WANT.

5. SALAM MENTIONED POSSIBILITY THAT ASAD IS WORRIED ABOUT HIS OWN INTERNAL SECURITY. HE HAD NOTHING DEFINITE IN THIS DIRECTION BUT KEPT GETTING REPORTS OF UPRISINGS AND DISSATISFACTION. FOR EXAMPLE, IT WAS RUMORED THAT ASAD HAD HAD TWO MEETINGS WITH
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SALAH EL-JDIDE, HIS OLD OPPONENT WHO WAS IN PRISON.

6. AS TO EDDE'S OPPONENT SARKIS, SALAM ALLEGED HE HAD VERY SHADY CONNECTIONS. ONE WAS KHALID KHUDR AGHA, A MAN WHO HAD KILLED HIS OWN FATHER-IN-LAW IN ORDER TO INHERIT A FORTUNE, SERVED PRISON TIME FOR THAT CRIME, BOUGHT HIS RELEASE AND WAS PROBABLY THE AGENT FOR FIVE OR SIX FOREIGN POWERS AND YET WAS ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL BACKERS OF SARKIS. OTHER BACKERS WERE

PEOPLE SUCH AS AHED BAROODY, SALIM EL-KHOURY AND ARMENIAN DEPUTY SORAN KHANAMORIAN. HE COULD NOT ACCUSE SARKIS PERSONALLY OF WRONG-DOING, BUT SARKIS RAN AROUND IN A VERY SUSPECT CROWD.

7. FINALLY, SALAM SAID HE WAS GETTING REPORTS FROM PEOPLE CLOSE TO CHAMOUN, ONE OF WHOM HE TELEPHONED IN LAMBRAKIS'S PRESENCE, THAT CHAMOUN WAS BEING PUSHED FORMALLY TO ANNOUNCE HIS OWN CANDIDACY FOR PRESIDENT. AFTER THE CONVERSATION, HE SAID THIS WAS POSTPONED, TEMPORARILY AT LEAST. SALAM ALSO CLAIMED THAT CHAMOUN WAS NOT BACKING SARKIS FOR PRESIDENT AS WERE PRANGIE AND GEMAYEL. CHAMOUN MIGHT IN FACT BACK EDDE.

8. COMMENT: MOST SERIOUS EXTRACT OF THIS DISCUSSION IS CONTINUED SYRIAN EFFORT TO CRUSH AND/OR SUBVERT JUMBLATT. SINCE JUMBLATT IS AWARE OF IT, IT GUARANTEES JUMBLATT'S DEFENSIVE REACTION AND JUMBLATT IS PAST MASTER IN SPOILING GAMES. BY SAME TOKEN, PALESTINIANS CANNOT AFFORT TO BREAK WITH JUMBLATT AND THUS LET SYRIANS DIVIDE AND CONQUER THEM SEPARATELY. END COMMENT.
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